

THE DANGEROUS MRS. DELANEY.

By

George M. Cohan.

Written for The

Ellinore Sisters.

Scene -- C. D. Fancy, Box set, set explained in diagram.
Soft waltz as curtain rises, Mrs. Delaney en-
ters C. D. Stops at C. D. and talks off.

Mrs. Delaney.

John, If any one calls for me this evening you may tell them I'm busy counting money. (Down Stage) That's the third banquet I've been to this week. These wine suppers will kill me. I feel so fatigued. (sits down) I certainly was the main Gazaboo at that reception to-night; Why there wasn't a man in the place could take his eyes off of me. I heard one of them say he wished he'd brought his whole family so they could all see me; And talk about jealous women, I never saw ~~such~~ a bunch in my life. One of them passed a remark that I looked like a cheese sandwich. I hit her with a finger bowl and nearly started a riot. But the place was decorated elegantly, and all lit up with indecent lights. I couldn't read the bill-of-fare at all, it was written in dago. I just told the waiter to bring me in anything he saw laying around loose And he brought me in a plate of biscuits; I told him I was hungry, to bring me something else,, and he brought me in another plate of biscuits, I kept going against the

biscuits all night, and some fellow had the nerve to sing She Was Bread In Old Kentucky. And you ought to see the thing they sent me home in; they called it a hansom cab; it looked like a dump cart. (picks up letter from table) A letter for me, I wonder if it's a touch. (opens letter) My Dear Mrs. Delaney, I would like to have a picture of your face as it stands. I draw pictures of Hogan's Alley for the Sunday papers, and if I can succeed in getting a likeness of you, my fortune is made. I will call at your house this evening for a photograph. Truly yours, Oscar Laff. Well, what do you think of that, they want my picture for the Sunday papers. I certainly am getting popular, and Mr. Laff is going to call here to-night. Maybe he owns the newspaper, I'll try to win him out. I mustn't let Jennie know anything about this. I'll wait till the paper comes out and surprise her. Ever since my husband fell in the sewer and died and I sued the City for Fifty thousand and got it, I've been the real cheese. (runs to C. D.) John! I expect a gentleman to call, Tell him to wait for me here in the parlor. I'll go down stairs and find a photograph. (exit ~~the~~ door in flat L.H. side)

Jennie.

(enter C. D. looks around) No one about, I guess Mamma must be out. I hope she is, I wonder what she'd say if she knew I was going to have a gentleman caller this evening, I could see a free fight right away. (reads) My Dear Jennie, Expect me this evening about eight o'clock I hope your mother isn't home, I don't like her face. Yours, Tom. The idea of him speaking of Mamma in that manner. But there, He isn't going to marry my whole family, and I suppose as long as he likes me I ought to be satisfied. Tom says he knows a thousand and one girls, and he says I'm the one.

(Introduction of song "Thousand And One Girls.")

Note ---Jennie, during above speech, and before song accidentally drops note on the stage. After song bell rings outside)

Some one at the door, I guess it's Tom, I'll go and see. (exits C. D. R. H.)

Mrs. Delaney.

(enter door in flat L.H.) No use, I can't find any of my pictures at all. I had some taken in my bicycle costume, and they're all gone; all I have left are the ones I had taken in tights; I don't dare give him one of those. The photographer said if I flashed them he'd be pinched. (sees letter on floor) Hello, what's this, (picks it up) A letter. (reads) My Dear Jennie, (aside) it's to my daughter. (reads) Expect me this evening about eight

o'clock, I hope your mother isn't home, I don't like her face, yours, Tom. (looks up from letter surprised, reads) I hope your mother isn't home, I don't like her face, Yours, Tom, Some fellow writing to my daughter and he doesn't like my face. Insults me through the mails. Me, the Belle of Second Avenue. I wonder who this Tom is? He doesn't like my face, eh? And he tells my daughter so And he's going to call here at eight o'clock. (goes to C. D. and talks off) John, bring up an axe. (down stage) (reads) I hope your mother isn't home, I don't like her-~~me~~ I'll go down stairs and get a mallet, and come back and lay for him. (exits 1 E.R.H.)

Jennie.

(enters C.D. looks around) I could have sworn I heard some one up here, I must have been mistaken. (Goes to c.d. talks off) Come on in, Tom, there's no one here. (enters property man c.d.) (points to chair near table) Sit down, make yourself comfortable, we'll spend the evening all alone. I'm pretty sure Mamma won't be home. You don't know how tickled I was when I got your note. Now just wait a minute, and I'll go downstairs and have the cook fix up a little lunch, I'll be right back, Tom. (exits 1 e.l.h.)

Mrs. D.

(enters c.d. reading letter) I hope your mother isn't home, I don't like her face. (aloud) If ever I lay me hands on the fellow who wrote that letter I'll ----- (sees Tom) (aside) I wonder who this is. (aloud) Who are you? Ahem, how dy'e do, hello, murray. (aside) Isn't he sociable, Ahem, (yells) hello, (screams) I say hello. I wonder where he smokes. (goes up and taps him on shoulder) Say, young fellow, what do you want? (aside) He thinks he's playing a game of silent fool. I'd give two dollars to know who he is. I wonder how he got in here. I can't imagine who he -----(thinks) I know, this is the man that wrote to me for me picture for the paper. (smiling) You'll excuse me, but are you Mr. Laff? I say are you the man that wants me picture for the paper? Why don't you talk? Can't you speak? Eh? (aside) I'll lose me voice talking to that fellow. (goes over to chair L.H. side of table and sits down) Say, what's the matter with you, are you off your nut? (aside) I see, He's deaf and dumb. (aloud) Are you a dummy? (aside) I'll write it out for him. (writes and reads) Are you a dummy? (hands it to Tom) (he reads it and then bows in the affirmative, she laughs) He is, I thought so. (writes and reads) What do you want? (hands it to Tom who reads it and begins to write) (While he's writing, laughs,)

He's going to write an answer. (he hands her note) (She reads) I want a photograph of your handsome face. (aside) That's who it is, this is the fellow from the newspaper. (aloud) Well, I'm very sorry but I have no pictures left. (louder) I say I have no pictures left, I say I (holding on to side) I forgot he can't hear.

Jennie.

(outside) Just fix up a light lunch of some kind.

Mrs. D.

There's me daughter voice, what's she doing home so early I'll have to get this fellow out of the house before she sees him.

Jennie.

(outside) Yes, I'll be up in the parlor.

Mrs. D.

She's coming. (to Tom) Say, young fellow, you'll have to get out of here in a hurry. Here, get over here in this room, until I get me daughter out of the house, I don't want her to know my picture's going to be in the paper. (pulls Tom over to door in flat L.H. and pushes him in.) If she saw him she'd want to know who he was and all about him.

Jennie.

(enters 1 E. L. H., surprised) Oh, Hello, Mamma.

Mrs. D.

Don't you Mamma me, you little monkey.

Jennie.

I wonder where Tom is.

Mrs. D.

So, the fellow that's going to call on you to-night doesn't like my face, eh?

Jennie.

Who are you talking about?

Mrs. D.

About the fellow that doesn't like my face, I'll put him on the bum if he shows up here to-night. I have the letter he wrote ~~me~~ to you.

Jennie.

(aside) I must have dropped ~~me~~ it.

Mrs. D.

Let me catch you going around with that fellow, and I'll break your face for you.

Jennie.

(aside) Tom just about heard her coming and got out.

Mrs. D.

And you were going to entertain this hoodlum while I was out.

Jennie.

Well, what if I was?

Mrs. D.

You let me see you entertaining any man in this house, and I'll entertain you with a club.

Jennie.

(laughs) Oh, you're only jealous. You're aware of the fact that you can't even get a man to entertain.

Mrs. D.

(yells) What?

Jennie.

Why, you know very well, Maama, that if a man ever took a good look at your face he'd laugh himself to death. (Mrs. Delaney grabs the axe, Jennie yells runs around table pursued by Mrs. Delaney, Jennie exits C.D. Mrs. Delaney at C. D. with axe.)

Mrs. Delaney.

(Comes down toward table) I'll cut down somebody's expenses with this axe if they don't stop talking about my face. (Tom opens door and starts to enter, Mrs. D. grabs book from table and throws it at him viciously.) Get back in your cage. (Tom exits back quickly) I wonder what there is about my face that makes everybody talk. Anything The janitor says I can believe. I'll go down stairs and ask him if he sees anything strange about my face. (exits 1 E.L.H.)

Jennie.

(enter C. D. carrying tray with food and drink, goes over and sets it on table) There now, I just think it's a shame that mother should frighten poor Tom out of the house like that. There's a nice lunch and everything gone to waste. I wonder if he went for good, I do hope he comes back. (glass crash and loud noise without)

I wonder what that is, I'll have to see. (exits 1 R.E.H.)
 (noise without, repeated; Mrs. Delaney enters C.D.) I'll
 bet four dollars that janitor will declare himself again,
 I asked him what he thought of my face and the language
 he used was brutal. (sees lunch) Hello, what's this
 bunch of free lunch doing here. The cook must have ex-
 pected a policeman. I think I'll eat it for spite. I
 wonder if the dummy's hungry, I'll ask him.
 (goes up to door and opens it, beckons Tom to enter.)
 Come on out here you flat head. (down stage) He's a cinch
 I can call him anything I want to and he can't give me an
 argument. (Tom enters, sees lunch, makes a dive for it
 and commences to eat immediately, he takes chair L.H.
 side of table) He has an appetite like a horse. (sits
 down in chair R. H. side of table and looks at Tom eat.)
 That's right choke, I hope you do, (aside) I think I
 could learn to love him. It's too bad he can't hear
 anything. (to Tom) Will you have a drink? (he bows
 in the affirmative, she jumps up) He heard that; I
 guess he could tell by the movements of me lips, alright
 then I'll go and get some wine. (goes to table and takes
 tin can from underneath) Some good Dutch wine. (crosses
 to left, Jennie at C. D.) I'll be back in a minute
 sweet-heart. (aside) He looks like a fried sausage.
 (exits L.1 E. laughing.)

Jennie.

(rushes to Tom) Ho, ho, so you're playing a double game
 eh? Courting my mother as well as me. Let me tell you
 right now, sir, that this is our finish. (up and down
 stage) Oh, to think that I should be deceived in this
 way. (to table pounding on it with fist) But never fear
 I'll turn the tables on you yet, you wretch. (up and
 down stage) To think ~~that~~ I should actually see my own
 mother throwing kisses to a glutton like you. That's
 right, eat yourself to death. (Mrs. Delaney at C. D.)
 (Jennie crosses to left) I'll go and get a policeman, and
 have you thrown out, you sneak thief you. (exits indig-
 nant 1 E.L.H.) (Tom keeps on eating all the time and
 notices nothing.)

Mrs. D.

(Down stage laughing) She's going to have the dummy
 pinched (laughs) She thinks he's a burglar, she's been
 jabbering away there and the poor devil couldn't hear a
 word she was saying. (laughs) (looks at Tom) Are you
 eating yet? He goes against that as if he was shy a meal
 ticket. (sits down) I used to know how to talk dummy with
 me hands, I wonder if he'd understand me. (biz of making
 ridiculous motions with hands, Tom looks up still eating,
 Miss Delaney takes full stage for this, motioning very

extravagant when Jennie enters C. D. unseen, she looks in surprise and comes down stage.

Jennie.

Why Mamma, what on earth are you doing?

Mrs. D.

(stops suddenly) (aside) I'll bet she thinks I'm ratty.
(aloud) I was just giving my friend the counter-sign,
he belongs to the same lodge I do.

Jennie.

Do you know who this man is?

Mrs. D.

Certainly I do.

Jennie.

What's he doing here?

Mrs. D.

He's here to see me.

Jennie.

To see you?

Mrs. D.

Yes, me.

Jennie.

Then you confess?

Mrs. D.

I don't know what you're talking about, but I hope so.

Jennie.

I see, it's all true, (biz of crying) Oh, Mamma, how
could you, how could you do it?

Mrs. D.

How could I do it? Who did I do?

Jennie.

(crying) Oh, Mamma, you'll break my heart.

Mrs. D.

I'll break your face in a minute.

Jennie.

(crying) Oh, this is terrible, terrible.

Mrs. D.

(aside) She's jealous. She's been making cracks about my having no gentleman callers, here's where I make a bluff. (calls) Jennie come here. (Jennie goes to Mrs. Delaney) Don't act so foolish in front of the millionaire.

Jennie.

The millionaire?

Mrs. D.

Yes, that's Alfred Gould, the millionaire, I met him to-night at the banquet, he followed me home and wants to marry me.

Jennie.

(surprised) What?

Mrs. D.

Oh, yes, he has a bank account that would choke a horse.

Jennie.

Why, Mamma, you surely can't be serious.

Mrs. D.

Well, I should say I am, why the man is daffy over me. (Jennie looks at Tom) (aside) I've got her guessing.

Jennie.

(aside) I see, Tom has been jollyng Mamma that he's a millionaire. (laughs) (aloud) Well, won't you introduce me to Mr. Gould? I'd like to meet him.

Mrs. D.

(aside) She wants to make a play for him. (aloud) I'll have to ask him, you see the millionaire is very particular who he meets.

Jennie.

Oh, I see. (biz of laughing)

Mrs. D.

(crosses to table, aside) I won't let on that he's a dummy. (to Tom) Alfred, oh Alfred, my daughter would like to make your acquaintance. Have you any objections? (no answer) (to Jennie) Mr. Gould says he doesn't care to meet any one now, he's too nervous.

Jennie.

(laughing) Yes, he looks nervous.

Mrs. D.

(aside) If that fellow keeps on eating he'll swell up and bust.

Jennie.

(aside) I guess that's the first square meal Tom's had in a week. (bell rings outside) There's some one at the door, Mamma..

Mrs. D.

Go and see who it is, I can't leave Alfred alone.

Jennie.

(laughing) (aside) A millionaire, I wonder what she'd say if she knew he was a boiler maker. (aloud) all right, Mamma, I'll go to the door. (exits C.D.R.H.)

Mrs. D.

Now that she thinks I associate with millionaires she'll get a swelled head, and wont talk to any of the neighbors (goes over and sits down, looks at Tom) When you get ready for desert give me the wink. (aside) he has an appetite like an elephant, (aloud) It's a good thing you didn't enlist. (aside) who'd ever think he was a newspaper man, he looks like an anarchist.

Jennie.

(enters C.D.) Say, Mamma, there's a man downstairs wants picture for the papers.

Mrs. D.

(jumps up) Another one?

Jennie.

He says he'd like to talk with you on the matter.

Mrs. D.

He'll talk with me on the door-step, that's where he'll talk with me. These reporters are the hungriest bunch I ever saw. No more of 'em will get in this house. My picture for the paper, eh? Gee whiz, but I'm getting popular, Jennie. Entertain the millionaire till I return (crosses Jennie toward C.D., Jennie toward table) See that he gets enough to eat, he's very bashful. (exits C.D.R.H.)

Jennie.

(to Tom, laughingly) Tom, this is the best joke on record I thought at first you were in love with Mamma, but the

very idea of your telling her that you were a millionaire is the funniest thing I ever heard. (laughs) She believes it. How in the world did you ever think of such a ridiculous excuse. (Tom keeps right on eating)(Jennie laughing.)

Mrs. D.

(rushes in C.D., to audience) That man downstairs says his name is Oscar Laff, the one that wrote me for me picture. Now, who the devil is this fellow. (calls to Jennie) Jennie, come here. (Jennie goes to Mrs. D.)

Jennie.

Yes, Mamma.

Mrs. D.

Do you know who that fellow is.

Jennie.

Why?

Mrs. D.

He's not a newspaper man.

Jennie.

A newspaper man? Why, of course not.

Mrs. D.

Then, who is he?

Jennie.

Why, it's Mr. Gould, the millionaire.

Mrs. D.

A millionaire? Sh (finger to mouth) I was kidding you. wait till I go get a shotgun and I'll bombard him. (exits on a run l E.R.H.)

Jennie.

(excited) A shot gun? She's going to shoot him. (to Tom) Tom, you've got to get out of here in a hurry, Mamma thought you were some one else. She's gone for a gun. She's liable to do anything, hurry, get out, please do. I beg of you. (Tom continues to eat)

Mrs. D.

(outside) I'll kill the Spaniard, that's what I'll do.

Jennie.

Tom, she's coming. Do you want to be murdered.

Mrs. D.

(outside) Where's that seventy-five inch musket?

Jennie.

(grabs Tom's hat and puts it on him talking ad lib, pulls the table away from him, he moves chair up to table and keeps on eating.) I plead ~~with~~ you, Tom, don't delay, please don't.

Mrs. D.

(outside) If I don't put that dummy on the bam, I'm an A.P.A.

Jennie.

(grabs Tom) Hide, get under the table, do something, she's furious. (grabs Tom and puts him under table) Oh, this is awful, terrible, horrible.

Mrs. D.

(enters on run 1 E.R.H. carrying musket) Where is he? I want to wing him once just for luck.

Jennie.

(all excited) He's gone.

Mrs. D.

Gone Where?

Jennie.

Out the front door, down the street.

Mrs. D.

I'll catch him if I have to hire a cab. (exits C.D.R.H. on dead run)

Jennie

(excitedly) The woman's going insane, she'll be arrested if she goes on the street with that gun. (down to table) Tom, Tom, Mamma's gone, now's your chance to escape, hurry if you ever did in your life. (Tom gets from beneath table.) Com on, I'll get you out the back, through the cellar; come on, follow me, it's your only hope. (Jennie exits C.D.L.H. on a dead run) (Tom goes to table, sits down, puts napkin under his chin, and commences to eat, Mrs Delaney enters C.D.R.H. and does not see him at table)

Mrs. D.

(on run with gun) (to audience) He must have dodged up a

side alley, I lost him somewhere. (turns and sees Tom at table, looks at him for a minute in surprise, and then turns to audience) How did he do it? That man certainly must be hungry. Well, he'll have one consolation, he'll die eating. (points gun, enter Jennie C.D.L.H., sees picture and screams)

Jennie.

Stop, Maama, what are you thinking of.

Mrs. D.

One side (motioning) I want to shoot the chutes.

Jennie.

What are you going to do.

Mrs. D.

Kill the robber.

Jennie.

Robber, Why, Maama, you're mistaken, this man is a friend of mine.

Mrs. D.

A friend of yours?

Jennie.

Yes, called to see me to-night. You mistook him for someone else..

Mrs. D.

A Friend of yours. Well, why didn't you say so in the first place, I thought he was Mr. Laff, the fellow that wanted me picture for the paper.

Jennie.

(to Tom) Tom, this is my mother.

Mrs. D.

What? Tom, the fellow that wrote the note. (makes a dive for Tom who dodges around table, Mrs. D. throws loaf of bread at him just as he exits c.d.) that's the fellow that said he didn't like my face.

Mrs. D.

Jennie.

Well, Maama, (consoling) he may not like your face, but he thinks the world of you, not only that, he has a great future.

Mrs. D.

Mrs. D.

If it's anything like his appetite, it's a peach.

Jennie.

Do you care if I marry him, Mamma?

Mrs. D.

I've come to that point in life where I don't care what happens; you can do as you like, I'm going to sing myself to death.

MEDLEY,

FINIS.